NOVEMBER 22, 2022 • VOL XIII • ISSUE #22

GRAB MAGAZINE

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LGBTQ+ PUBLICATION

BEAU SWARTZ

ADAM IN FRAGMENTS

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CONTENTS

THIS ISSUE

BEAU SWARTZ 6

CATE BLANCHETT 10

BRAD BALOF SANTA SPEEDO RUN 20

DALE BOYER 22

TRAVEL NEW ORLEANS 24

GRAB A FRIEND (DRINKSPECIALS) 28
NEXUS DANCE CHART 30

GRAB HOLLY 32
GRAB THEATER 44
Bar/Restaurant/ Directory/ 46 & 48
MAP 49
CLASSIFIEDS 50

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In Memorium
Mark Nagel (Co-Founder)
1961 - 2019

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GRAB BEAU

L.A. Confidential

Beau Swartz Takes on Los Angeles' insidious underground sex-trade in New Dekkoo Series, Adam in Fragments

By James Booth

Beau Swartz stars in *Adam in Fragments*, a provocative and gritty drama about a male hustler navigating Los Angeles' insidious underground sex-trade.

Premiering this month on Dekkoo, each episode of *Adam in Fragments* builds a new picture of Beau's character, Adam. Viewers witness his encounters with johns, pimps, other sex workers and Lucy, a young and naïve aspiring adult film starlet that Adam decides he needs to protect. For the first time in his life, the rentboy allows himself to become emotionally accessible to someone and it triggers a series of violent events.

While most television shows and films about sex work glorify the trade or exploit it, Adam in Fragments does neither. It examines the profession through Adam and finds the humanity in the characters. "They're not painted as heroes, villains, or victims," Beau Swartz explains. "They merely exist." We spoke with the actor from his Los Angeles home.

James Booth: How did you land the lead role in Adam in Fragments?
Beau Swartz: Back in 2019, Omar Salas Zamora (the director) and I started talking about making a film centered around a hustler in Los Angeles. I was interested in how two people can experience the same trauma yet have a completely different outcome to their lives. We developed it into a short. Dekkoo saw it and premiered it on their platform. It was well received and so Omar and Calvin Picou wrote it into a larger project.

JB:Were you familiar with the Los Angeles underground sex-trade?
BS: I was aware of the scene through movies and art. I've also lived in Hollywood for more than ten years and I've walked the streets late at night. You can see the not-so-subtle reminiscences of the scene that is still out there. By the time we had got to filming both Omar and I had done a ton of research because of the short we made. I also watched a lot of documentaries like Wiktor Grodecki's trilogy Not Angeles But Angels, and read photo books like, Eve Fowler's Hustlers. I really liked studying the 90's photo books of hustlers in LA. I found an unspeakable truth in their eyes. I felt like I knew them when I studied the portraits.

JB: How did you approach Adam as a character?
BS: Adam is a lost soul. He's misunderstood, running from his past and doing everything he can to ignore it. He's searching for a place to belong yet pushes people away. I approached Adam like I do all characters. I start off finding the place in our lives that we intersect and then go from there. I create a life as if it were my own, just having made different choices, that led me to the place that Adam ends up.

JB: What were some of the challenges with playing Adam?
BS: Understanding that some of Adam's demons have also been mine at some point in my life. He and I have a lot in common and it was difficult to experience some of the choices he made.

JB: Was it important that Adam be likable?
BS: I don't think I thought it was my job to make Adam likable or unlikable. He's just human; at times people like him and other times, they don't. It wasn't important to make him likable but to make him a person with lots of layers, both good and bad.

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JB: What is it that draws Adam to Lucy?
BS: They are both lost, yet she still has her innocence. She also has the capacity to love him unconditionally, unlike his clients and pimp. Adam desperately needs something outside of himself to care about and he wants to protect her from going down the same path he has gone.

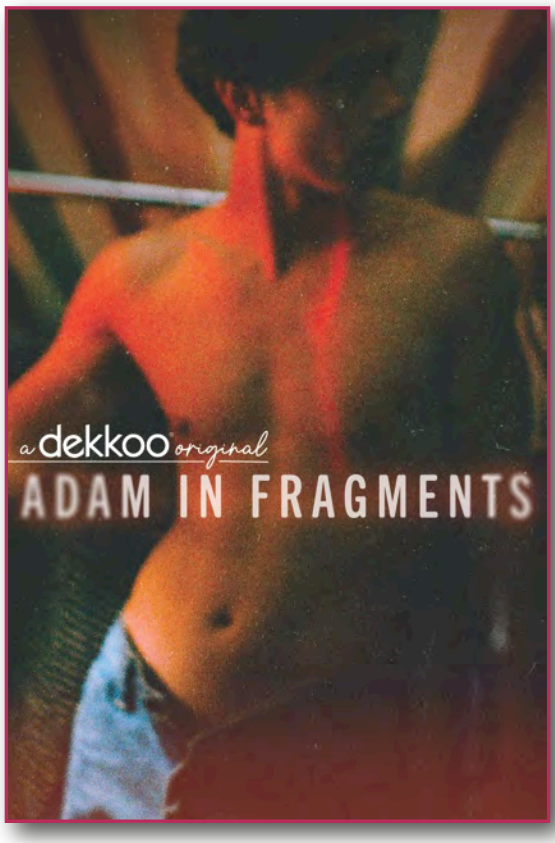
JB: What was it like filming with Keiva Bradley, the actress who plays Lucy?
BS: Kieva is such a talented actress and having the opportunity to act with her, as much as I did, was an honor and a pleasure. After we wrapped filming, Keiva gave me a card that kinda looked like a ransom note! It was actually a beautiful letter from Lucy to Adam. **JB: What did it say?**
BS: I think that it something I won't tell. It was special.

JB: Have you seen Keiva or any of the cast or crew from Adam in Fragments since filming?
BS: We all keep in touch. I've known some of them for years and consider them to be good friends. Everyone on this project was just so awesome and I hope our relationships continue for a long time.

JB: How do you hope viewers feel about Adam and his circumstances?
BS: I hope that they feel a kindred spirit to Adam. I want them to relate to him and his circumstances, and not judge his life. When all is said and done, Adam is like everyone else, doing the best that he can with what he has.

J.B: What is one thing that we can all learn from Adam?
BS: One thing that I learned from Adam, and maybe others will as well, is that loving myself isn't selfish, it's crucial. Also, we need to be able to forgive ourselves. We all make mistakes. What matters is what we do with the lessons we learn.

Adam in Fragments premiered on Dekkoo on November 17, 2022. For more information, visit ***Dekkoo.com.***



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GRAB CATE

Photo Courtesy of Focus Features

Tár centers a staggering lesbian success story. But whose success is it? The new film starring Cate Blanchett raptly observes its powerful lesbian lead — then asks what her power means

By Gregg Shapiro

In writer-director Todd Field's latest film, "Tár," there's a sense of intoxication in play, an air of fascination in the treatment of his leading character as a kind of monument — albeit one shadowed with foreboding.

The film introduces Cate Blanchett as Lydia Tár, a contemporary classical conductor and composer at a career high, soon to restage Mahler's fifth symphony with the Berlin Philharmonic; given that we encounter her at the absolute top of the heap, it's unclear how much higher her star could rise. his group Oh My God, so I was doing The Kickback and Oh My God for a couple of years when I first moved here and, between the two bands, was touring a lot. In The Kickback, I was a little bit older than those guys, they were kind of young whippersnappers. Iguana was closer to my age and mindset, and I chose to leave The Kickback and join Oh My God permanently. Then Oh My God broke up and I joined a cover band for a couple of years. Iguana started The Claudettes while I was doing that. Claudettes had a change in their lineup and that's when Iguana asked to join them, so I quit the cover band.

From the artful silhouettes of Lydia's suits to her collection of fine books and records to her marriage to Sharon, her orchestra's first violinist (played by the brilliant German actress Nina Hoss), her life seems to unfold in a kind of walled garden appointed with grand, well-chosen features. Even as the film renders her career achievements as monumental — so much so that her status as an EGOT is tossed off as an aside — the matter of her lesbianism is framed both in her words and the film's portrayal quite casually, making the question of what being lesbian means to Tár (and to "Tár") as much a mystery as the nature of the dizzying array of works she must have scored.

Blanchett, probably known best to queer audiences for her starring role opposite Rooney Mara in Todd Haynes' 2015 romantic drama "Carol," recently told Variety that the character's lesbian status is "not the headline or the issue," adding that she admired the role's matter-of-fact treatment. And Blanchett's right, at least about that casualness: Lydia's life as a lesbian, her position as a prominent woman in a male-dominated field, and her mothering of a daughter, Petra, are all treated as natural facts of her life. Instead of these features serving as primary features of her identity, her life seems defined by her discipline, privilege and prowess; she expresses skepticism even of her gender having impacted her career, and at one point suggests scuttling the identity-based parameters of a charitable fellowship aimed at supporting female musicians. A girlboss who's transcended making a fuss about it, she luxuriates in a position of power

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suggests scuttling the identity-based parameters of a charitable fellowship aimed at supporting female musicians. A girlboss who's transcended making a fuss about it, she luxuriates in a position of power countless women could only dream of.

And they do. For the women in the field who surround her — none enjoying anywhere near her level of celebrity — Lydia's way of being provides a tantalizing spectacle, arousing a sense of professional aspiration that becomes bound up in more traditionally charged forms of desire. And as the film progresses, the feeling only grows. For Lydia's assistant Francesca (played with a watchful reticence by Noémie Merlant, just as splendid as in "Portrait of a Lady on Fire"), Lydia's position — as her boss, a key gatekeeper and a model for her own wants — stands as a defining feature of her life. For Francesca, and for others, and especially queer women, Lydia's power — alongside, surely, her charisma and her craft — are understood to generate both an attractive and a repellent charge.

But it's more than incidental that Lydia knows and plays on this, bringing the movie to a place of meditation, as she barrels into a web of scandals, on what female power means. For Lydia is a kind of womanizer, an egocentric and casual abuser in more than one classic male sense, treating men and women alike who surround her as disposable, and all but the same — even if the nature of her exact misdeeds are something the film is often guarded about.

With its rash of #MeToo-style allegations of professional misconduct eventually ensnaring its protagonist, "Tár" makes itself contemporary through its coy engagement with the histrionic dramas of "cancellation," sure — but especially through its casual treatment of Lydia's lesbian identity. (In this, a German setting surely helps). With Lydia as the film's guiding force and ever-flexing primary subject — as well as the object of its supporting cast's desires and fears — treatment of the character shows her holding power flippantly enough to harbor the easy potential to abuse it. Considering this, Field and Blanchett's work on the character feels like something that wouldn't have been possible even a handful of years ago.

Treating identity not as magical but as a factor which could be either formative or not in one's life, the movie's queer depiction is torn between admiration and fear of its leading character's charisma and accomplishments. But what it's not, to its credit, is congratulatory toward her, knowing her to possess not just a queer identity but to have levels of wealth and white privilege so staggering as to be, for most LGBTQ+ people, beyond imagination. Lydia, by contrast, can't seem to even dream of not having those resources — and appears to believe they're destined to be hers whatever she might do. It'll be something to look forward to, the film seems to say, when a broader range of people can even be imagined to enjoy the same varieties of power and acclaim.

Photo Courtesy of Focus Features

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GRAB ZACH

Going out with Zach Verdoorn of The Claudettes

By Gregg Shapiro

Insurance salesman by day, Zach Verdoorn was a full-time musician up until the pandemic. He was regularly DJing, picking up random gigs here and there with some cover bands in Chicago, and playing in the band The Claudettes. Currently, he's keeping the day job while maintaining his role as bass player and guitarist in The Claudettes. An openly queer musician, Verdoorn made some time in his day to discuss The Claudettes' new album "The Claudettes Go Out!" (Forty Below), his third with the band. **[The Claudettes perform on 12/2 in Aurora at The Venue and on 12/10 in Evanston at SPACE.]**

Gregg Shapiro: For those unfamiliar with The Claudettes, what can you tell them about the genesis of the band's name.
Zach Verdoorn: This is kind of a complicated question. There's no actually some major history involved. The Claudettes started as a drum and piano duo. The drum and piano duo was employed by a woman at a bar called Claudette's Bar. Claudette was kind of a hardass…to be honest with you, the whole thing was a spoof [laughs]. It was a fun spoof. They sold it and they told people that it was true. It was like kind of a performance piece. The band would get terrible gigs on purpose. One time, they played in a Staples store. They booked it as the Staples Center, but it was really the center of a Staples store [laughs].

GS: That's very clever. Was there or wasn't there a Claudette?
ZV: We hired someone to be a Claudette. When we were first saw doing shows, we would have a little bar for her onstage. She would buy drinks from the bar and she would sell them from the stage like it was her bar. I wasn't in the band at that time, so it's always weird for me to answer that question because it's still kind of a myth that we kind of keep going. We also don't really push it at all anymore. We're more of just a normal band touring around now. We've added (vocalist) Berit (Ulseth) and me, and it was too hard to carry that myth around.

GS: When did you join The Claudettes?

ZV: I joined The Claudettes in 2016. Johnny Iguana and I had played together. We've known each other for almost 20 years. I met him while I was a concert promoter in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as well as a musician. His band played with my band at this really nice pavilion in Sioux Falls, where I was living at the time. He told me he liked my guitar playing and said if I ever moved to Chicago to look him up. It just so happened that the band I was in called The Kickback, moved to Chicago because our singer's wife moved there. I called Iguana and asked if he wanted to get together and play, and he said yes. I joined his group Oh My God, so I was doing The Kickback and Oh My God for a couple of years when I first moved here and, between the two bands, was touring a lot. In The Kickback, I was a little bit older than those guys, they were kind of young whippersnappers. Iguana was closer to my age and mindset, and I chose to leave The Kickback and join Oh My God permanently. Then Oh My God broke up and I joined a cover band for a couple of years. Iguana started The Claudettes while I was doing that.

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Claudettes had a change in their lineup and that's when Iguana asked to join them, so I quit the cover band.

GS: You play bass and guitar in The Claudettes. How long have you been playing each instrument, and do you play any other instruments?
ZV: I started playing guitar when I was 11. Then I joined a group that needed a bass player when I was 23. I'd never played bass before. They liked my personality more than the bass player that they had at the time [laughs]. They didn't care that I couldn't play bass as well as he did. They just wanted somebody they could get along with. I took up the bass at age 23. I practiced for three days and I learned slap technique, because this guy was a crazy slap bass player like Flea (of Red Hot Chili Peppers). I'd never slapped the bass before [laughs]. I took a weekend and I got two lessons from a friend of mine who was a really good bass player. Each day, for 11 hours over this one weekend, I learned how to play all their songs and learned all the slap bass parts. My hands were sore and raw at the end of the weekend, but I was able to get it done.

GS: Johnny Iguana (aka Brian Berkowitz) gets songwriting credit on the three Claudettes albums that I have, including the latest, "The Claudettes Go Out!". Do the other band members have any input in that process?
ZV: We do. Johnny writes the meat and potatoes of the songs. He's the main songwriter. He writes all the lyrics and all his piano stuff. He'll bring in songs and they're completely done. The drummer, the singer, and I will come in and we'll add some peas and carrots and stuff like that here and there. We help with arrangements. We help with ideas for vocal harmonies. I write all my own guitar parts. Johnny will sometimes write a guitar part, or he'll make a suggestion. I do write my own bass lines and guitar parts.

GS: Beginning with the new album's opening track "Lovely View" and continuing with "Park Bench," which has a string section, there is an audible change in mood from its 2020 predecessor "High Times in the Dark." Would you agree?
ZV: "High Times In the Dark" was a little more romping. We wrote that in a time before the pandemic. We recorded that album in 2017. We were touring a lot and we had a really sunny disposition. We were rocking and rolling. We wrote "Go Out!" during the pandemic. You can hear that we definitely changed the mood. I wouldn't say that it was less optimistic or anything, but I do think that the songwriting took a shift during the pandemic.

GS: The song "Exposure" diverts from the usual Claudettes sound in that the male band members' vocals are more prominent.
ZV: That was Johnny coming up with something out of left field. He does that all the time. Usually, there's a song on each record that's kind of like, "Whoa! What person wrote this?" Yet, it's Johnny again. The song is basically about people suggesting that an artist do something pro bono or free. "Make this poster for my band. Tons of people are going to see it! You'll probably get some more work out of it."

GS: Which never happens, of course!
ZV: Exactly! All the really great gigs I've gotten have been from other great-paying gigs. So, how about you pay me, and I get exposure, okay?

GS: You're a Sioux Falls, South Dakota native, and according to The Claudettes' website, there are tour dates scheduled for that city. What does it mean to you to perform for the hometown crowd?
ZV: It's been awesome. Every time we've gone back lately it's been for really big shows. The first show that I did with The Claudettes in Sioux Falls was Jazz Fest and we were opening for Bruce Hornsby. When our set happened, we played for a few thousand people. The last couple of times we played was a Friday night outdoors in Sioux Falls and there were like three or four thousand people there.

GS: What are the pros and cons of being the gay member of The Claudettes?

ZV: I love it because everyone in the band is really supportive of me. In fact, they've encouraged me to try things. I was dabbling in drag for a while. My ex-boyfriend used to do me up all the time. He taught me a lot about drag and things like that. The Claudettes did this series. We had a bunch of my drag friends, and I got dressed up in drag and we did this basement video thing. It was fun! I feel like I looked great. We were tossing around the idea of me doing drag for shows. But the thing is, with the traveling, and how much work goes into it to actually look really good, it takes so many hours. I've been trying to think of a way to kind of land in the middle of presenting a little more queerly. To answer your question, it's great to

be in a rootsy group and to be out. The (roots) genre, in the past, has been lacking any queerness. It's nice to be in the band and be open. As I'm talking to people and they're talking to me, I'm honest about my sexuality and everybody's like, “Oh, I would never have guessed.” It's like, “Well, here I am!”

GS: Are you aware of a gay following for The Claudettes?

ZV: No, I wouldn't say that there's a gay following. I personally feel there's not a huge following for this type of genre in the gay community. Maybe I’m wrong about that or maybe it just hasn’t clicked yet. But I wish there was. I wish there was a little more support. I do know a lot of queer people in Chicago that know of the band and a lot of them haven’t had a chance to come out and see us yet.

GS: If The Claudettes were invited to play Pride Fest or Market Days…

ZV: … we’d do it in a heartbeat! We always talk about it. “We wish we’d get invited to do some queer events in Chicago!” We're 100 percent all about that.

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GRAB BRAD

Frost Warning as Santa Speedo Run Returns! Saturday December 3rd

An Interview with Brad Balof - General Manager of Sidetrack

By Rick Karlin

(L)Brad Balof with Debbie Fox(R)
Photo by Jed Dunalas

'Tis the season for frozen naughty bits, the Santa Speedo Run Northalsted is back! This year's event will feature a full afternoon of activities that begin at noon on Saturday, Dec 3. More than 300 participants are expected to gather at 12 p.m. at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, with the charity run stepping off at 2 p.m. Overall, more than 1,000 people will take part in a day spent cheering on and celebrating participants who brave frigid temperatures in typically nothing more than a swimsuit.

Proceeds from the annual event benefit Center on Halsted, Chicago's LGBTQ community center. Funds will support the Center's youth housing initiative which provides a place to call home and crucial services to LGBTQ youth. Fundraising by participants runs through event-day with all details on the day provided at the event's website. Spectators are encouraged to give donations in advance at the same website. Donations also will be accepted at Sidetrack, day of event. Sidetrack has been a sponsor of the Santa Speedo Run Northalsted for many years.

"We are so appreciative to the runners and donors who have supported Center on Halsted for the past several runs, and especially to Jeff and Karl for creating this event" said CEO ***Modesto Tico Valle***, the Center's CEO. "This year's fund raising for our youth housing initiative will have a major impact on our ability to continue providing crucial services and a place to call home for many LGBTQ youth."

It was the brainchild of husbands ***Karl Sponholtz*** and ***Jeffrey Colgan***, starting with a small group of friends more than a decade ago. It has grown into one of the largest fun-runs in Chicago while also raising more than $500,000 to support services and programs benefiting the LGBTQ community of Chicagoland. Last year alone, through participant and donor support, the run raised almost $100,000 for the Center.

"The Santa Speedo Run Northalsted has been dear to our hearts since we created it. It has been so rewarding to watch it grow each year, raising vital funds to support the health and well-being of LGBTQ people across Chicagoland," said Colgan and Sponholtz.

We asked Sidetrack manager Brad Balof about the event.

Rick Karlin: How long has Sidetrack been involved with the Santa Speedo Run?
Brad Balof: Sidetrack has been involved with the Speedo Run since its third or fourth year.

RK: What makes the Santa Speedo Run so popular?
BB: It's one of our favorite events of the year. Many non-profit organizations have very formal black-tie galas to raise $100,000. This is a sillier, sexier, and in some ways livelier version of that type of fundraiser. What Karl and Jeff have built over the years has become an iconic staple of the Holiday Season on Northalsted and at Sidetrack.

RK: Are you participating this year?
BB: I like to dress for the run but will be managing at Sidetrack all day.

RK: Any advice on how to stay warm?
BB: Find someone cute and share some body heat.

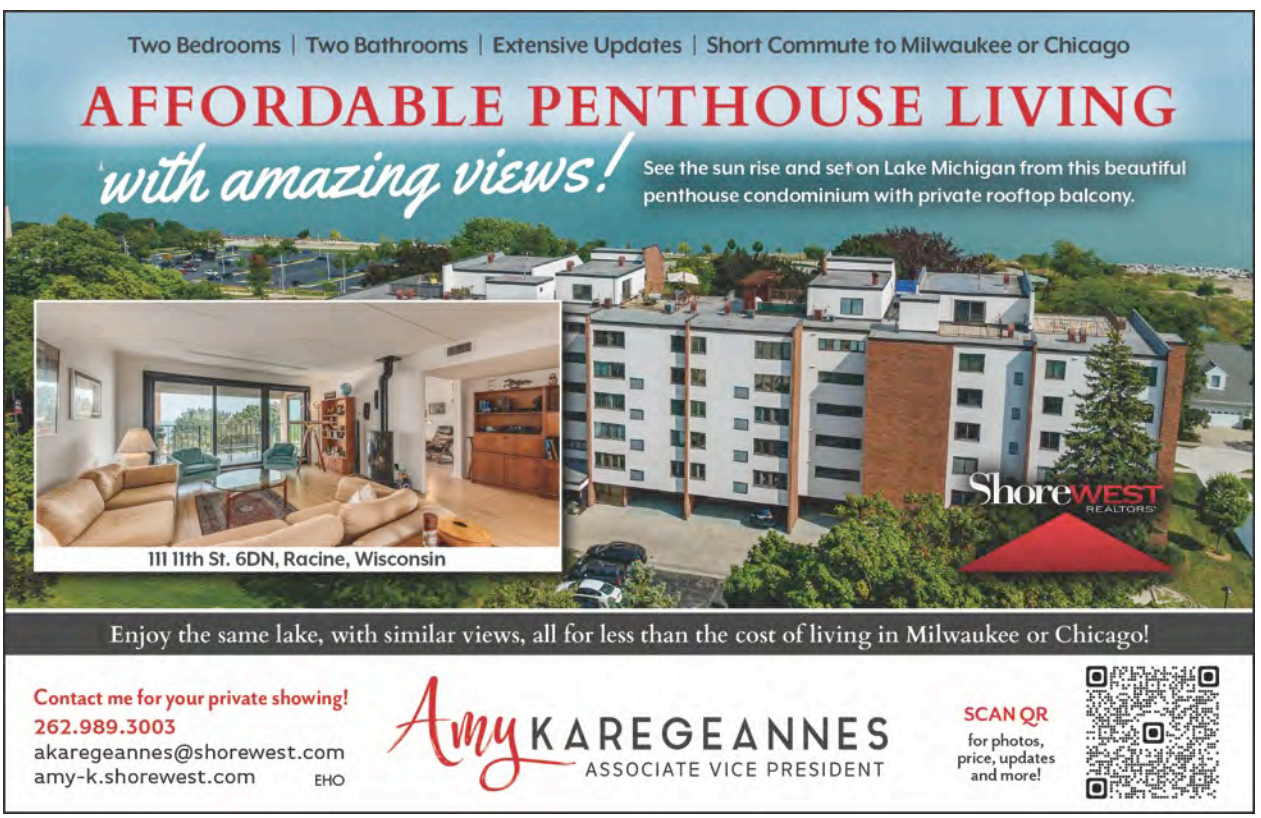
RK: What can one do to avoid shrinkage?
BB: Find someone cute and share some body heat [laughs]. The Men's Room is next door if anyone needs to purchase any products that could help avoid shrinkage.

RK: If there was a theme song to the Santa Speedo Run, what would it be?
BB: There is one already – it's "Jingle Balls."

RK: What can we expect the day of the event?
BB: First, we get everyone registered and undressed and ready to run. Clothing check is optional on this day, and coat check for those not running is $2. The party will also feature prizes and games, including an awards ceremony for top individual and team fundraising.

The event is hosted by ***Debbie Fox*** and the fun doesn't end at the finish line. It continues with an afterparty at Sidetrack with ***Zamora Love & Sasha***. Then there's some rousing caroling and donation presentation, cute costumes, fun games, sponsor activations and, of course, skin. The party extends into the evening with many of the skimpily clad participants celebrating while Sidetrack remains open until 3 a.m.

Other sponsors of the event include Tito's, Miller Lite, Perrier, Men's Room Chicago, Third Wing Business Strategies, Wellness Home at Northstar Healthcare, and American Airlines. Registration to be a part of the event as an individual or as part of a team is now open with information and signup at **https://santaspeedorun.centeronhalsted.org/register.**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GRAB DALE

"World" of wonder: An interview with gay writer Dale Boyer

By Gregg Shapiro

In the small gay world of Chicago's literary scene, I first encountered writer Dale Boyer via his involvement in the gay writers' group New Town Writers in the early 1990s. By the time he joined NTW, I had left the group and started my own. However, our paths crossed regularly at various literary functions. Since those early years, Dale has published a few poetry collections, a novel, a book of short stories, and a children's book. All of this in addition to being the Director of Conflicts and Records for a mid-size law firm in Chicago's Loop. Dale was generous enough to make time for an interview regarding his new book, "Columbus in the New World: Selected Poems" (Oh Boy Books, 2022).

Gregg Shapiro: Dale, your new book "Columbus in the New World: Selected Poems" (Oh Boy Books, 2022), features a Mark Doty blurb and a Jorie Graham quote in the poem "The Walnut Room." Do you consider both poets to be influences? Who are some other influences?
Dale Boyer: Graham's work I was always aware of but am only now beginning to read. Mark Doty's work has always been an influence, as I think it has to have been for nearly every gay poet writing these days. He's not only an essential poet of the gay experience but also one of the great poets of the 20th century, period. Early on, I was greatly influenced by Wallace Stevens, and my work has always had this pull between the very terse (Stevens) and the very emotional (Doty). I also love Robert Hass, who found a kind of middle course, and I love Jean Valentine's statement that poems are essences. I've always been very drawn to the evocative, fragmentary bits – the ruins that conjure up the greatness that was Rome.

GS: With whom did you study when you received your MFA at Vermont College?
DB: Mark Doty, Mark Cox, and Leslie Ullman – great poets and excellent teachers, all. Vermont College has a low residency format for their MFA. You spend less time on campus, but you get a great deal more individualized attention. It was the perfect solution for me.

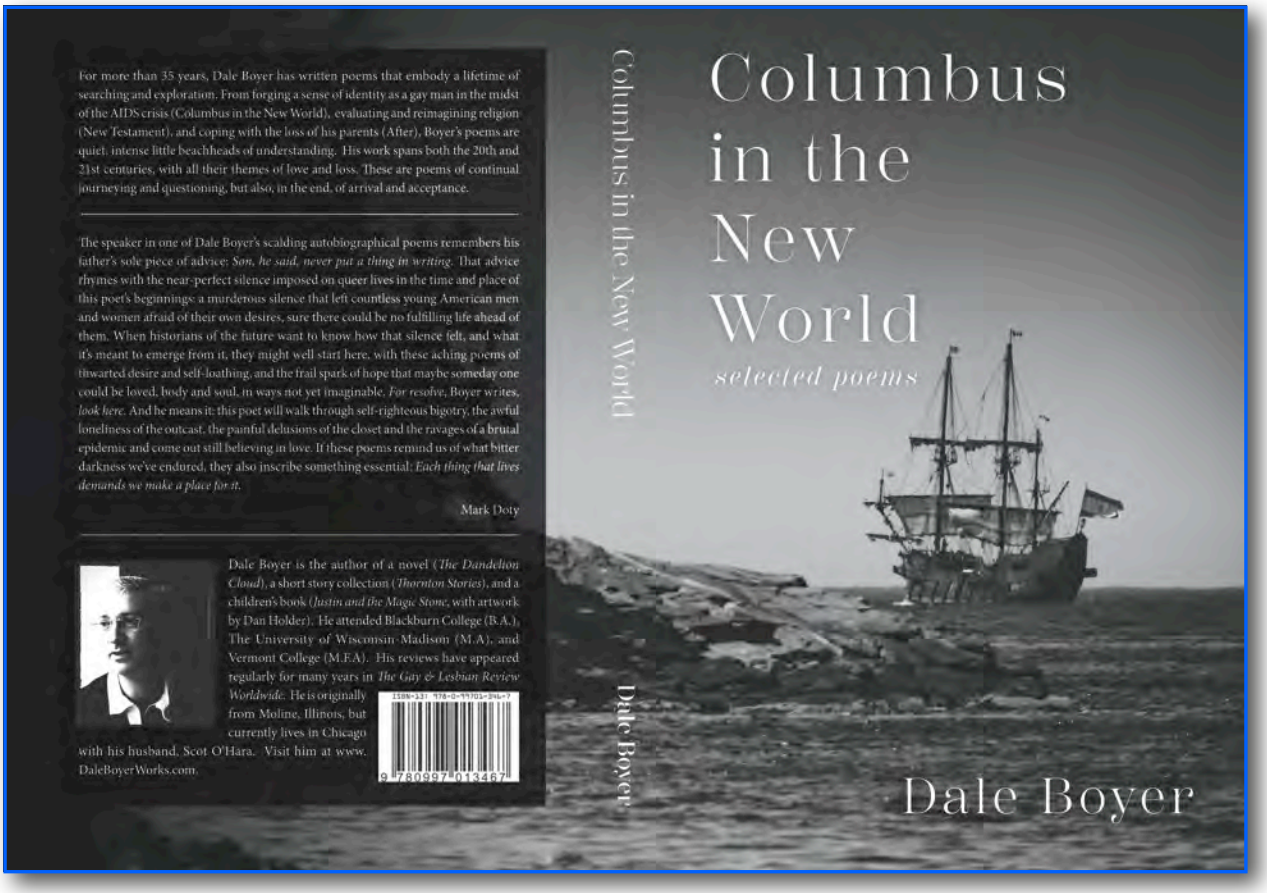
GS: You write both fiction and poetry. Do you have a preference for one or the other?
DB: I like them both. Early on, I thought I had to call myself a poet, or a novelist, or whatever. Now, I'm happy to just call myself a writer. I've also done a screenplay and a play. I think they all inform your work.

GS: You live in Chicago, a city known for its vibrant poetry scene. Have you been active in it? Done a poetry slam?
DB: Early on I was. Indeed, that's where I first met you, via New Town Writers. The pandemic put many readings on hold, though I think some are coming back. I've also participated in some virtual readings and even virtual book clubs, which actually went very well.

GS: Why was now the right time to put out a selected poems collection?
DB: It just felt right. I think the pandemic created a lot of room for contemplation, and when I looked at my work, I started to see that it had a certain shape. There was always the Columbus imagery in the early poems – that theme of exploring new worlds of sexuality and coming out. Then, I began to see that my middle work was heavily involved with exploring religion and what I still believed. And, after the death of our parents (my partner and I lost all four of our parents in the space of five years), there was that theme of exploring a world without them, a world of loss. So, the Columbus theme seemed like a good way to frame all of them.

GS: What was involved in the process of selecting poems for the book?
DB: Just literally putting all of them in the center of the room and beginning to sort. The early manuscript was much longer, and then I began to see that certain poems still didn't fit, some were duplicative. Then, I had a few people read and offer advice.

GS: Poems from the first section of the book are about coming out and coming into your own as a gay man. Do you have a favorite poem from that section, one that you think is most representative of who you were at that time?


For more than 35 years, Dale Boyer has written poems that embody a lifetime of searching and exploration. From forging a sense of identity as a gay man in the midst of the AIDS crisis (Columbus in the New World), evaluating and reimagining religion (New Testament), and coping with the loss of his parents (After), Boyer's poems are quiet, intense little beachheads of understanding. His work spans both the 20th and 21st centuries, with all their themes of love and loss. These are poems of continual journeying and questioning, but also, in the end, of arrival and acceptance.
The speaker in one of Dale Boyer's scalding autobiographical poems remembers his father's sole piece of advice: Son, he said, never put a thing in writing. That advice rhymes with the near-perfect silence imposed on queer lives in the time and place of this poet's beginnings: a murderous silence that left countless young American men and women afraid of their own desires, sure there could be no fulfilling life ahead of them. When historians of the future want to know how that silence felt, and what it's meant to emerge from it, they might well start here, with these aching poems of thwarted desire and self-loathing, and the frail spark of hope that maybe someday one could be loved, body and soul, in ways not yet imaginable. For resolve, Boyer writes, look here. And he means it: this poet will walk through self-righteous bigotry, the awful loneliness of the outcast, the painful delusions of the closet and the ravages of a brutal epidemic and come out still believing in love. If these poems remind us of what bitter darkness we've endured, they also inscribe something essential: Each thing that lives demands we make a place for it.
Mark Doty
Dale Boyer is the author of a novel (The Dandelion Cloud), a short story collection (Thornton Stories), and a children's book (Justin and the Magic Stone, with artwork by Dan Holder). He attended Blackburn College (B.A.), The University of Wisconsin-Madison (M.A), and Vermont College (M.F.A). His reviews have appeared regularly for many years in The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide. He is originally from Moline, Illinois, but currently lives in Chicago with his husband, Scot O'Hara. Visit him at www.DaleBoyerWorks.com.
ISBN-13: 978-0-99701-341-7
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Columbus in the New World
Columbus in the New World
selected poems
Dale Boyer
Dale Boyer

DB: I started the book with the very first poem I wrote at Vermont, in a class exercise with Mark Doty. It used Marianne Moore's poem "The Steeple-Jack" as a starting point for exploring a physical setting or a feeling, and I flashed on an experience I'd had as an intern in Washington, D.C in college, where I witnessed a man speaking to his son in Spanish. It became a dialogue with my own father about being gay, and ultimately set up the theme of exploration for a great deal of the rest of my work.

GS: Your husband Scot O'Hara is also a writer. Did you seek his input when putting this book together?
DB: Absolutely! Scot is not only a great writer ("Tarantella") but a great editor as well. In fact, he's given me the final edit of everything I've ever written. I trust his judgment implicitly.

GS: Do you share work with each other when you're creating?
DB: Pretty much only after we feel like we're done. I like to think we're good editors of each other's work, but it has to be pretty well along before we show it to each other.

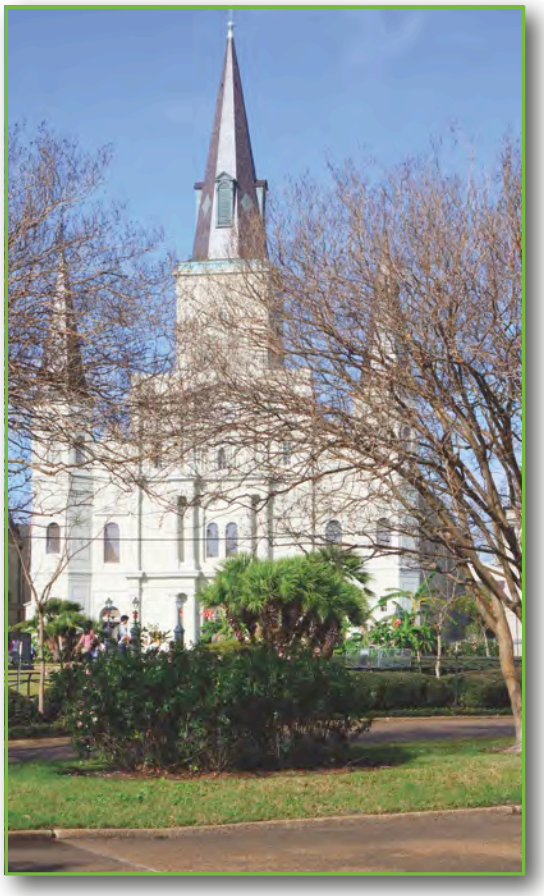
GS: You've also been writing book reviews for "The Gay & Lesbian Review" for a long time. What do you like best about that?
DB: I love feeling like I have a voice in the conversation. Being in the Midwest, it often seems as though we're outside of the literary world on either coast. I often think the gay experience in the heartland is overlooked as well, which is partly why, with my novel ("The Dandelion Cloud"), and my short stories and children's book ("Thornton Stories"; "Justin and the Magic Stone") I attempted to give a voice to the gay experience of the whole middle section of the country that is often not represented.

GS: Is there a recent book you reviewed that you'd like to recommend?
DB: I didn't actually review it, but because of a review in the current issue of "The Gay & Lesbian Review," I recently read an older book by Neil Bartlett called "Ready to Catch Him Should He Fall," which I was absolutely flabbergasted by. It wasn't on my radar at all, but I actually think it may be THE great gay novel of the older generation (meaning, most of the twentieth century!). It's funny, elegiac, lyrical, archetypal, metaphorical, and extremely moving. I've also encountered works like "Bitter Eden" by South African writer Tatamkhulu Afrika, and "Radio" by Tonu Onnepalu, from Estonia. These are dazzling, really important works I might never have discovered except for the fact that I was reviewing them. That's what I enjoy about reviewing so much: it really puts you in touch with your community.

Bananas Foster and the Voodoo Lady

VUE Orleans a Highlight of a Visit to the Big Easy

By Bill Malcolm



It feels like Mardi Gras on Bourbon Street every day in the French Quarter in New Orleans. Between the great food, the charm of the French Quarter, the amazing history, and the great LGBTQ+ nightlife, you can't go wrong with a visit, even in winter.

WHAT TO DO

VUE Orleans is the new roof top interactive museum atop the Four Seasons Hotel at 2 Canal Street. The interactive immersion goes into the diverse cultures that converged to create New Orleans. It showcases the city's incredible mix of cultures and nations that made it the great city that it is today. The Voodoo Lady, the baby Jesus miniatures in the King Cakes, how the Po' Boy sandwich got its name are just some of the things you will learn about. Red beans and rice were created onto eat Mondays while doing your laundry. Why? It's easy to make. The interesting tidbits you will learn here in this fascinating city, which is a blend of cultures includes Spanish, Haitian, African, Italian, Native American and French, to name a few. Details at **https://vueorleans.com/.**

Take the street car to Audubon Park or north along Canal Street. Get an all-day pass. These "Jazzy Passes" a steal for $3. The streetcar can take you along St. Charles Avenue and the red streetcars on Canal Street go all the way to City Park with its Sculpture Garden located next to New Orleans Museum of Art.

Walk around the French Quarter and along the river front of the Mississippi River.

Taking a class at the New Orleans School of Cooking and learn how to make jambalaya, gumbo, pralines, and white chocolate bread pudding. You will find them at 524 St. Louis Street or on line at **www.nosoc.com.**

NIGHTLIFE

Freaky Friday means drag shows at the Oz Bar. You will find them at 800 Bourbon.

Café LaFitte in Exile, at 901 Bourbon Street, is the oldest gay bar in the U.S. It is still going strong.

The Bourbon Pub at 808 Bourbon Street is celebrating its 47th anniversary. It is a lot of fun. Sit on the balcony to enjoy the Bourbon Street scene.

Not gay but also worth a stop are:

The House of Blues, at 225 Decatur, is great for live music and a great bar.

Listening to the jazz band at the Ritz Carlton Davenport Lounge. It's a nice break from the honky tonk noise of Bourbon and Canal Streets on a weekend night.

WHERE TO EAT

Try the barbeque shrimp at Neyow's Creole Café in mid-City. Also on the menu: shrimp creole, fried Gulf oysters, pasta on the bayou (fresh Gulf shrimp and crawfish) , stuffed crab, and gumbo.

The red beans and rice and salmon are excellent at Landry's. The have a great $18 lunch box special.

33 Galatorre's Bar and Steak is a great option.

The 200-year-old Napoleon House Restaurant is in a 200-year-old French Quarter landmark. The building's first occupant was the mayor of New Orleans from 1812 to 1815, who offered his residence to Napoleon in 1821 as a rebuilding refuge during his exile. Napoleon never made it, but the name stuck.

Café du Monde features café Americano and beignets (the fried donut treat). The coffee in New Orleans also contains chicory giving it a unique flavor.

WHERE TO STAY

I stayed at the Marriott on Canal Street. Bargain hunters may also like the nearby LaQuinta. All the chains are here as well as boutique hotels.

GETTING THERE

I took Southwest to the new Louis Armstrong Airport and then took the E1 Jefferson Parrish Veterans-Airport bus from the 3rd floor departure area to downtown for just $2. Or take the RTA Airport Express route 202.

OTHER TIPS

Pick up a copy of the weekly, *Gambit* (**www.bestofneworleans.com**).

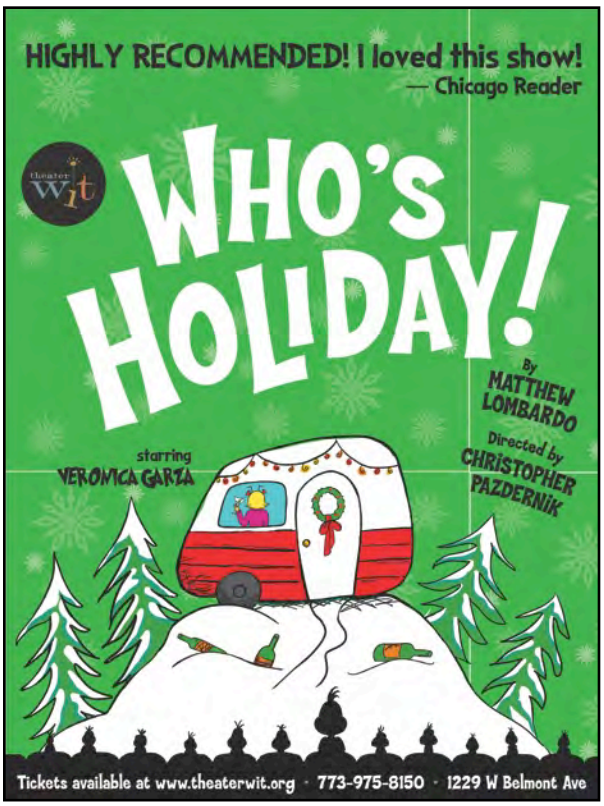
Here are some informative links to plan your visit to the amazing Crescent City:
LGBTQ+ Itineraries: **https://www.neworleans.com/things-to-do/lgbt/lgbt-itineraries/**

LGBTQ+ Bars: ***https://www.neworleans. com/things-to-do/nightlife/ gay-bars/***

There is nowhere else like New Orleans. It makes for a great holiday.

Bill Malcolm is North America's only syndicated LGBTQ+ value travel columnist. Special thanks to New Orleans and Company for their travel tips and passes to VUE Orleans.

Bourbon Pub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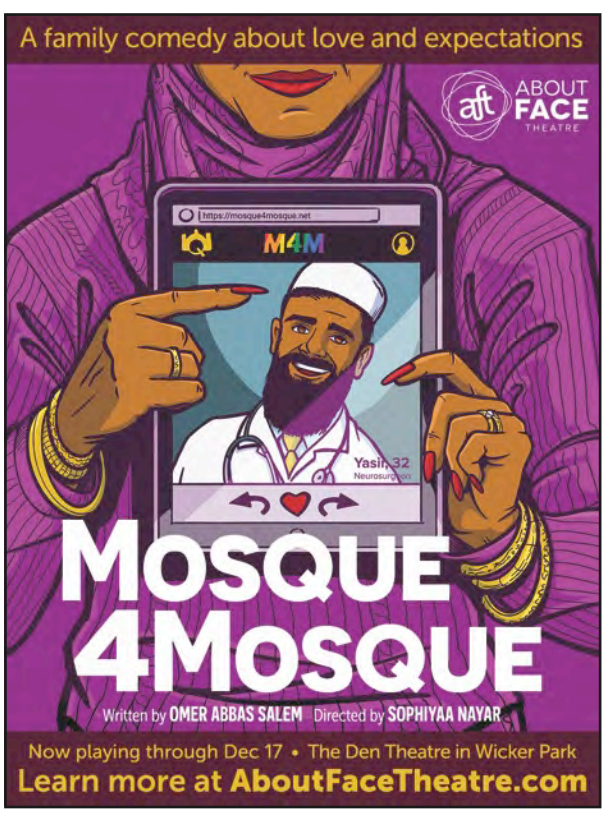
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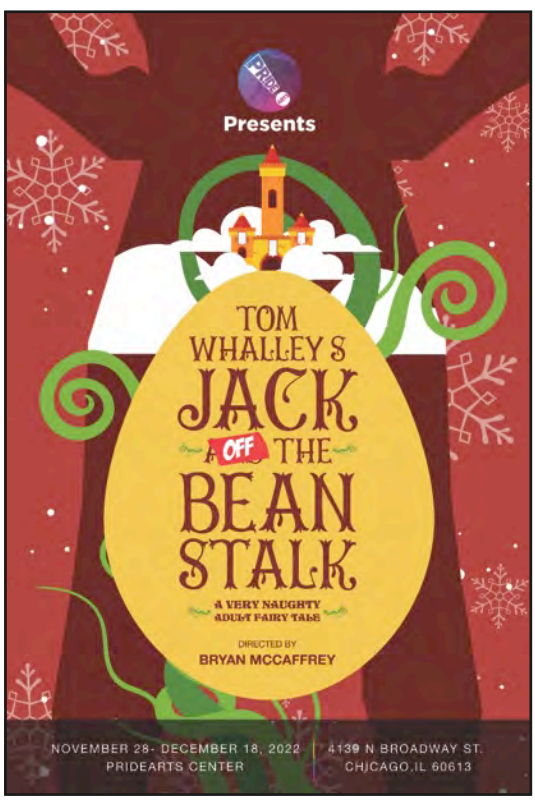
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Daily Specials;

MONDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), $4StoliCocktails (Any Flavor). **@mosphere:** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlies:** Bingo 7 – 11 pm Dancing until close**. Hydrate:** Lips and Mascara Doors at 8pm Show at 10pm. **Lark:** Happy Hour 5-7pm, Bottles of Wine 50% off with dinner entree purchase. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 4pm, Dancers 8pm. **North End:** Open at 11am, $5 Well Drinks. **Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview:** Open 2pm-2am, $5 Drafts & Cans, $6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, $7 Glasses of Wine, $8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, $5 Bud Lights 4-6pm.**Shakers on Clark:** Comedy Night $1 off Well Drinks and Well Shots. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, Musical Monday Show Tunes 8pm-2am. **Steamworks:** Every 3rd Monday TM4M (Trans Men For Men) 8pm-2am. **The Sofo Tap:** $4 Whiskey, Rye& Bourbon $3 Miller Lit Drafts$5Big Ass Long Islands, $4 Tallboys, 5Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. **Touche:** Euchre Night, Come out and Play 7-10pm Sports on our screens Club room Open!.

TUESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), $6 Big Miller Lite Drafts $3 House Shots. **@mosphere:** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlie's:** TuneUp Tuesday Karaoke 7 – 11PM, Tag Team Tuesdays 11p – 2am, Dancing until close. **Houndstooth:** $2 Tacos, ½ Off Bottles of Wine, $5 Red or White Sangria, $5 Chambongs, $3 Fireball, $22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, $22 Mexican Beer Buckets. **Hydrate:** TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm $8.95 Martinis **Lark:** 50% Off Bottles of Wine with any Entree Purchase, Bud Light $5, Select Wine $5, Well Cocktails $6 5-7pm 50%off Bottles of Wine with purchase of an Entree. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. $5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** $6 Big Miller Lite Drafts, $3 House Shots, $5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tallboy Beers. **North End:** Open at 11am, $5 Canned Beers, Seltzers & Ciders. **Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview:** Open 2pm-2am, $5 Drafts & Cans, $6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, $7 Glasses of Wine, $8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, $5 Bud Lights 4-6pm.**Shakers on Clark:** Game Night, Free Pool, $3 Domestic Bud, Bud Light, Michelob Ultra, Miller Lite, Miller High Life and PBR. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, Trivia Tuesday 8-10pm, TRL Tuesday: Totally Rad Line-up of 90's-to-Now Music Videos 10pm-2am, OUTspoken LGBTQ+ Storytelling 1st Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm. **Steamworks:** Every Tuesday 4 pm – 4 am Guys Under 25 Get In Free* (*Free 30 day membership and free locker). **The Sofo Tap:** $4 Premium Well Cocktails, $4 Tallboys,5Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts.**Touche:**Hardcore Cruisin' Sponsored by Leather64Ten No Cell Phones/Wifi

WEDNESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's),.$4 Premium Well Cocktails. **@mosphere:** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlie's:** Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, Sapphire's Secret Shadows 10pm – 1 am, Dancing until close.**Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm $8.95 Martinis **Lark:** Free Bingo, 50% Off Nachos & Totchos, $8 Villa One Margaritas Frozen or on the Rocks, Traditional Flavor only. Bud Light $5, Select Wine $5, Well Cocktails $6 5-7pm.**Lark:** Happy Hour5-7pm $4 Dud Light Drafts $6 Well Cocktails. Buy One Pizza Get one half offDie In Only**Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. $5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** $3 Miller Lite Drafts, $4 Stolis (All Flavors), $5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tallboy Beers. **North End:** Open at 11am $5 Lagunitas Draft & Cans. **Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview:** Open 2pm-2am, $5 Drafts & Cans, $6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, $7 Glasses of Wine, $8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, $5 Bud Lights 4-6pm **Shakers on Clark:** Karaoke Night $1 Off Long Islands. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, All Things Taylor & Ariana 1st Wed of month, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, All Things Britney & Rihanna last Wed of month: all 9pm-2am. **Steamworks:** Bear Hump Every second Wednesday 6-9pm A monthly mid-week gathering of Furry Men. **The Sofo Tap:** $3 House Shots, $4 Titos Coctails,$6Big Miller Lite Drafts. $5Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. **Touche:**Jockstrap Night Sponsored by Full Kit GearFree Clothing Check.

THURSDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), $5 Whiskey, Rye & Bourbon.**@mosphere:** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, RuPaul Drag Race All Stars 6 Viewing Party - 7pm. **Charlie's:** Survivor 10 pm – 1 am, Dancing Until Close. **Hydrate: Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm $8.95 Martinis. **Lark:** Happy Hour5-7pm $4 Dud Light Drafts $6 Well Cocktails . 7pm Extreme Bingwith Vian Dejour. 50%off Nachos or Tatchos $8 Villa One Margaritas Frozen or on the Rocks Tradional Flavor Only.**Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. $5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** $5 You Call It's, $5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tallboy Beers. **North End:** Open at 11am, $5 Deep Eddy Cocktails **Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview:** Open 2pm-2am, $5 Drafts & Cans, $6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, $7 Glasses of Wine, $8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, $5 Bud Lights 4-6pm. **Shakers on Clark:** Darts Night $1 off Fireball, Jager, Malort and Well Shots, $2.50 PBR Cans. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, Let's Go Thursdays with Alex Kay & Friends 9pm-2am. **Steamworks:** Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. **The Sofo Tap:** $4 Premium Well Cocktails $4 TallBoys, $5Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. **Touche:** Throwback Thursdays70's& 80's Music & Porn by BijouVideo.

GRAB YOUR FRIENDS

FRIDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), $7 Big Miller Lite Drafts$3 House Shots.**@mosphere:** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlie's:** 1st and 3rd Fierce Fridays 10p – 1am, 2nd Fierce Fridays - Traffic Light Party 10p – 1am, 4th Fierce Fridays - Glow Up Party 10p – 1am, 5th Fierce Fridays – Strut 10p – 1am, Dancing until close. grabbyAwards.com,**Hydrate:**Fresh Faces A New Drag Competition Second and Forth Friday of the Month. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm $8.95 Martinis. **Lark:** Happy Hour5-7pm $4 Dud Light Drafts $6 Well Cocktails .Every Friday from **Meeting House Tavern:** $5 Tito's, $7 Big Miller Lite Drafts, $5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tallboy Beers. **North End:** Open at 11am, $3 Miller Lite Drafts 4-7pm. **Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview:** Weekend Buckets $25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.) **Shakers:** $4 Domestic Bottles $5 Well Mixed Drinks, $10 Giant 23oz Long Islands in 22 flavors. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, TGIF Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am..**The Sofo Tap:** $7 Big Miller LiteDrafts $3 HouseShots. $5Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts.**Touche:**

SATURDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), $5 Lagunitas IPADrafts $5 Premium Well Cocktails$12 mimosa Carafes. **@mosphere:** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 3pm-5pm, Dancers 10pm -1am. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 2pm-3am. **Charlie's:** Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, The Main Event 10pm – 1am Dancing until Close. **Lark:** Lakeviews #1 Free flowing Brunch11am-3pm **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open with dancers at 3pm. $5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** $5 Signature Margaritas, $5 Premium Well Cocktails, $12 Mimosa Carafes, $5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tallboy Beers. **North End:** Open at 11am, $3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. **Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview:** $10 Champagne Bottles, $5 Juice Kits, $3 Bud Lights 12-2pm, Weekend Buckets $25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.). **Sidetrack:** Open at 1pm, SaturGay Drag & Games with Sasha & Zamora Love 3-6pm, Saturday Night Dance Party 9pm-3am, Dog Day 1st Saturday of the month 1-5pm. **The Sofo Tap:** $4 Lost Coast Tangerine Wheat $5 Signature Margaritas, $4 Tallboys, $5Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. **Touche:**1

SUNDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: .$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), $5 Signature Margaritas $12 Mimosa Carafes.**@mosphere:** $6 Jack Products, $4 Domestic Draft, House Shots $2. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors Open at 11am, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 2pm-2am **Charlie's:** Queeriod! Every other Sunday 5pm – 7pm, Singsational Sunday Karaoke 7pm – 11pm Mas Leche 11pm – 1am, Dancing until close. **Hydrate:** Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Divalicious brunch with Madam X 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm $8.95 Martinis . **Lark:** Lakeviews #1 Free flowing Brunch11am-3pm **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open with dancers at 3pm. $5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** $3 House Shots, $5 Premium Well Cocktails, $12 Mimosa Carafes, $5 Frozens, $5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tallboy Beers. **North End:** Open at 11am, $3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm **Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview:** $10 Champagne Bottles, $5 Juice Kits, $3 Bud Lights 12-2pm, Weekend Buckets $25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.) **Sidetrack:** Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am **The Sofo Tap:** $7 Big MillerLite Drafts, $6 Chicago Handshake, $5 Prairie Vodka Cocktails, $5Jager, Fireball & Malort. $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts.**Touche:**

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	Artist	Title
1	INNA	Magical Love
2	MK & BURNS	Better ft. Teddy Swims
3	INNA	Wherever You Go
4	Armin van Buuren ft. Maia Wright	One More Time
5	Swedish House Mafia	Heaven Takes You Home
6	Blasterjaxx X Henri PFR X Jay Mason	Summer Jams
7	RAYE	Black Mascara
8	Sigma	Here We Go Again
9	Alok x Sigala x Ellie Goulding	All By Myself
10	Young Bombs	Kinda Funny ft. Audrey Mika
11	LP Giobbi	Forever And A Day ft. Caroline Byrne
12	Lewis Thompson x David Guetta	Take Me Back (Radio Edit)
13	Paige x Nihil Young x Lauren L'aimant	River (Radio Edit)
14	Win and Woo	All This Motion ft. Louis The Child
15	Aviella & Conro	Way Back
16	Coco & Breezy	Just Say ft. Tara Carosielli
17	KREAM x Camden Cox x IDEMI	Chemistry
18	Tove Lo	2 Die 4
19	Benny Benassi & Anabel Englund	Lightwaves
20	Lucas & Steve x CRCLE	Every Day
21	The Knocks x Paul Woolford x Dragonette	Slow Song (Paul Woolford Remix)
22	Shane Codd & Bryn Christopher	Feels So Good (Radio Edit)
23	Lucas & Steve x 4 Strings	If It Ain't Love ft. Lagique
24	Karen Harding	Other Side Of Love (Radio Edit)
25	GTOfice	Never Together
26	Becky Hill & Galantis	Run (Galantis & Misha K VIP Mix)
27	Afrojack & Black V Neck ft. Muni Long	Day N Night
28	JES	All Or Nothing (Original Mix)
29	ARTY ft. Annie Schindel	Where Have You Been
30	Martin Garrix x DallasK & Sasha Alex Sloan	Loop

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GRAB HOLLY

The Tyranny of the Mean Girls

By Holly Maholm

My heart was racing. Mike and Dave had retained me to serve as Dave's defense counsel in connection with the complaint filed against him by a student at the high school. Dave had rejected that student's request to join the Legionnaires, which he felt he had to do after the student declared his pronouns to be "they/them." I knew, of course, that Queen Penelope had little patience with the efforts of lawyers, and she might even command me to decline this representation, when she learns of it. I was in a tizzy.

In asmuch as this matter will be heard by the local school board, who will decide whether or not to fire Dave for his decision, I went to consult with Larry, the vice-principal. I found him in his office, where he greeted me warmly.

"Holly!" he began. "I'm happy to see you! I have a legal matter to deal with, and I could use your advice." I replied that I had heard all about it, and that I had already agreed to defend Dave. Larry was not surprised, and went on, "No problem. I'm glad Dave will be well-represented. I would hate to lose him as a teacher in this school." I asked Larry for his account of how the dispute arose.

"I have been a vice-principal here for nearly 20 years, and there is one big change I have observed. Which is: Years ago, any student, teacher or administrator could have told you who were the 'mean girls' at the school. Now, this group would change from year-to-year, but we always had them. They were always the prettiest, best-dressed and most 'socially sophisticated' girls at the school. They had the best hair and make-up, the latest, most fashionable clothing, and the most athletic and desirable boyfriends. At lunch, you would find them sitting together at that one table where all the popular kinds sat. You couldn't miss who they were.

"Why were they called 'mean girls?' Because they maintained their unchallengeable status by spreading hurtful gossip about anyone who fell short of their perfection. Did another girl – 'Tina' – wear last year's styles or carry a few extra pounds of weight? Then they would repeatedly point out those defects to Tina until they made her cry. They were the worst of bullies, constantly on the lookout for anyone with conspicuous insecurities; then – having found such a person (which, honestly, could have been anyone) – they would mercilessly attack until boredom set in, after which they would seek out a new victim."

Larry went on. "Those were the old days. Today, the young teachers we have – many of whom majored in Gender Studies – have raised up a new species of 'mean girl.' No longer does any girl have to be pretty, or have money for the latest fashions, or a car. No. Today, all a girl has to do to become a powerful 'mean girl' is to adopt some made-up identity like 'non-binary' or 'pan-gender,' and then attach some absurd pronouns to it… like 'they/them.'

"Such a woke 'mean girl' - a 'Wokie' – will search out some innocent girl at the school who hasn't yet adopted a new gender or pronouns, and then, just like the old days, will backstab and ridicule that girl for being 'a tool of the patriarchy' or maybe 'racist' or 'transphobic.' In this way, the Wokie can elevate her own power and status by bullying any girl who hasn't yet 'transitioned' to some fraudulent, imaginary gender. "Years ago, what Dave brought to this school was

brave. He was 'out' to the whole community, and because of his example, it became acceptable to be LGBT. Before that, young men who were gay – but who were not out – were often bullied by the mean girls and other popular kids. One of them would start a rumor that 'Billy' was gay, and Billy would soon find himself sitting alone in the lunchroom.

"Today, thanks to Dave's example, Billy doesn't suffer that gossip. Nevertheless, we now have the problem that every student has to pretend to be something they're not. Are there really 56 different genders at the school? No way! It's the Tyranny of the Mean Girls that forces kids to claim to be something made-up. I'm in danger of losing my best teacher to this Reign of Tyranny by the Wokies – who are aided and abetted by their Gender Studies mentors - whom no one has the power to resist."

Larry exclaimed. "I refuse to lose Dave! You're a tranny, Holly, and I know you've got a bunch of tranny friends over at Donut Time. So… I'm begging you. Help!"

His heartfelt plea reminded me of one of my tranny friends, a person whose personal motto is "Don't fuck with me, bitch!" and I decided there might be hope, after all.

(To be continued)

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman living in Cleveland, Ohio. Look for Holly's book Offered Magic: My Life Among the Unicorns (now available on Amazon) which collects the first 126 episodes of Holly's adventures involving both magical unicorns and her LGBTQ friends. Send a message to Holly at ***www.hollymaholm.com.***

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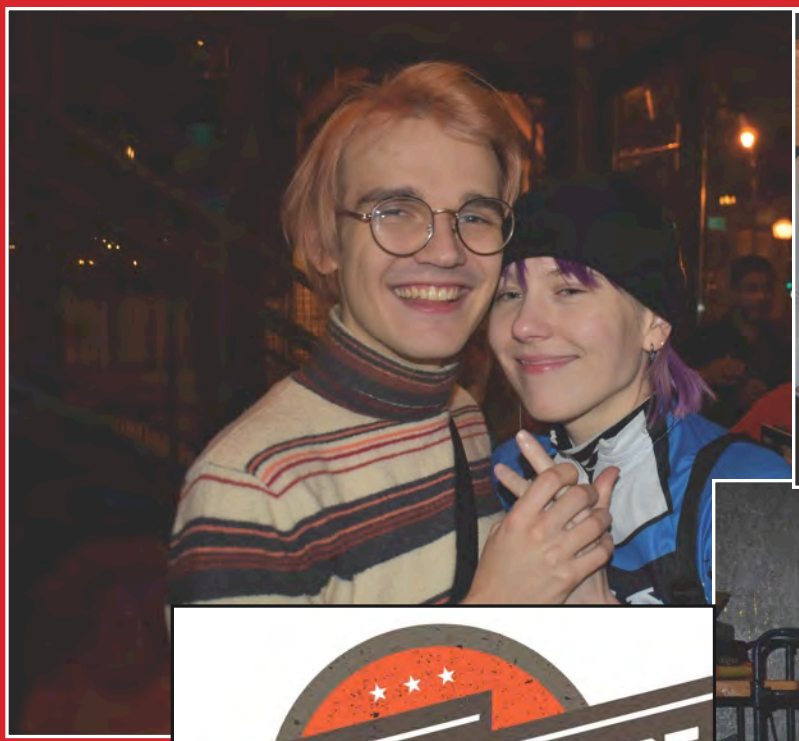

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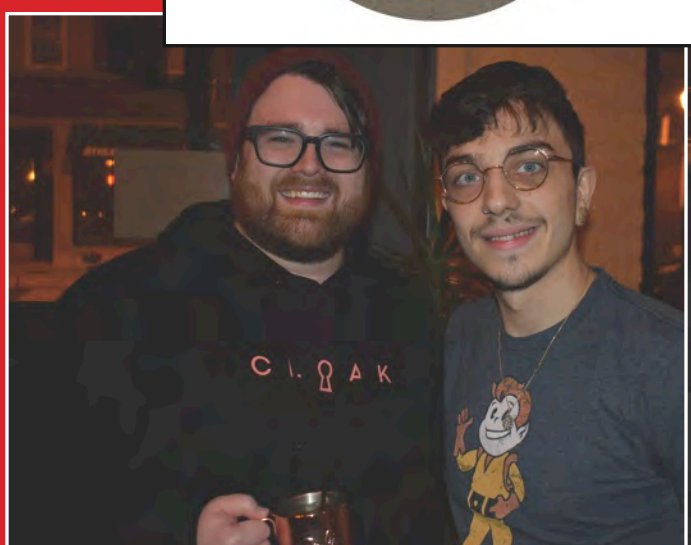

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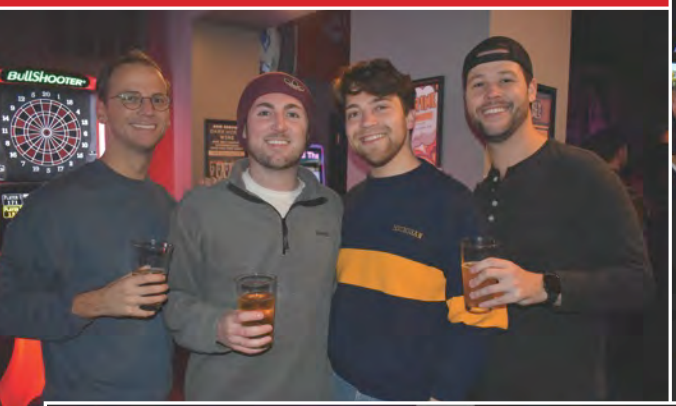

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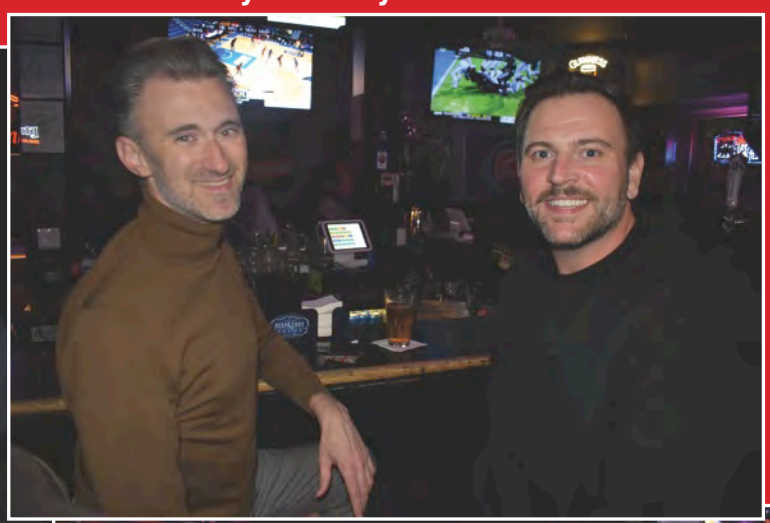

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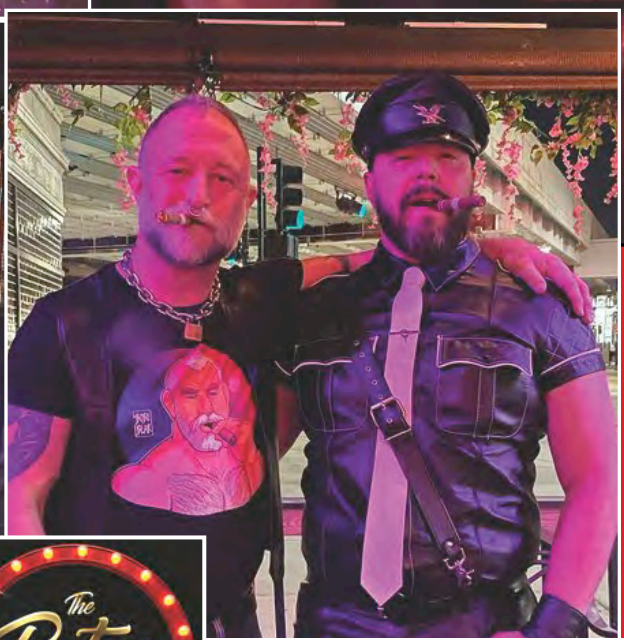

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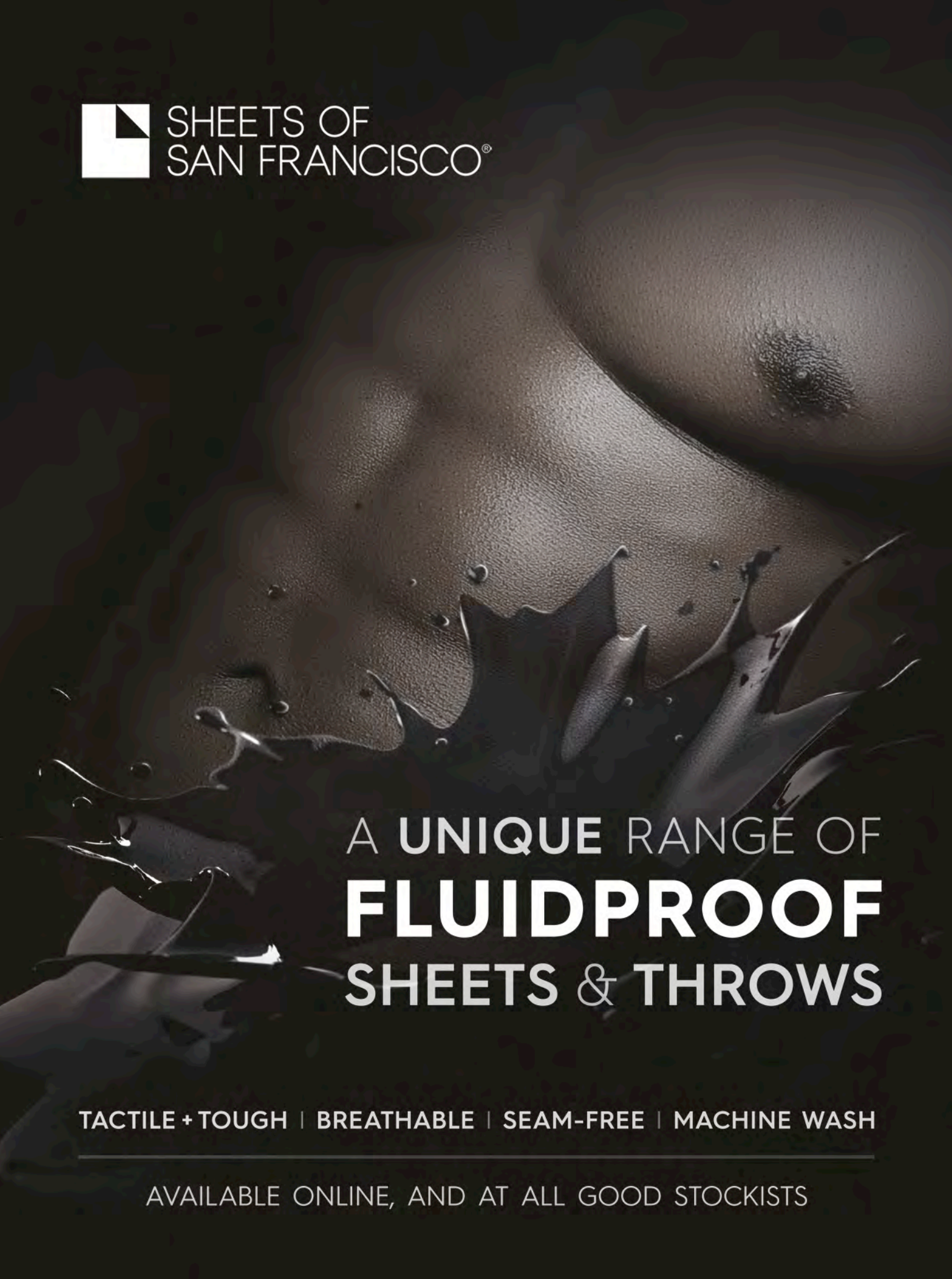
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GUEST CONDUCTOR BRENT HAVENS, VOCALIST MiG Ayesa AND A FULL ROCK BAND AT THE RIVIERA THEATER IN CHICAGO THANKSGIVING WEEKEND FRIDAY NOVEMBER 25th

Bridging the gulf between rock n' roll and classical music, conductor/ arranger ***Brent Havens*** takes the podium to present The Music of Queen, a program he scored to extend the listening experience of Queens exceptional tunes. Performed by the Chicago Philharmonic orchestra and amplified with a fullrock band and vocals, Havens and his ensemble capture Queen's distinct sound and will feature many ofthe band's most popular songs including *"Bohemian Rhapsody," "Another One Bites the Dust,"* and*"Somebody to Love."*.

The fall tour for The Music of Queen includes a performance on Friday night, November 25 at the RivieraTheatre. Show time is 8:00 pm. A newly-designed all-reserved seat setup will be in place at the theatre

MIG Ayesa, the lead vocalist on this tour, first became immersed in the music of Queen by starring as

Galileo Figaro in the West End musical *We Will Rock You*. For this production, Ayesa was handpicked by

Brian May and ***Roger Taylor***, two original members of Queen, and received firsthand musical instruction from the famous musicians. Ayesa also performed alongside May and Taylor for special performanceslike the 1000 th show of We Will Rock You. "Even though many people have heard the music of Queen,having their songs performed live with a full rock band plus an orchestra elevates them to a differentlevel," said Ayesa. "This is a celebration of Queen's iconic music and is an experience people will never forget."

Joining Ayesa, the five other members of the touring rock band, and the Symphony on stage is arrangerand conductor Brent Havens. "The great thing about the music of Queen is it is so rich harmonically

and melodically that I heard the orchestra in my head right away and knew how I wanted to arrange the music," said Havens. "Once I heard the music come alive, I didn't have to make any changes. The music speaks for itself."

For tickets or more information visit **https://www.jamusa.com/**

NUNS4FUN REOPENS ITS HOLIDAY CLASSIC, CHRISTMAS BINGO: IT'S A HO-HO-HOLY NIGHT AT THE GREENJOUSE THEATER CENTER FOR THE 2022 HOLIDAY SEASON

Nuns4Fun is bringing back its holiday classic, CHRISTMAS BINGO: IT'S A HO-HO-HOLY NIGHT, for this holiday season at the Greenhouse Theater Center, Chicago.Written by ***Vicki Quade***, one of the creators of the international hit, Late Nite Catechism, the show will run for six weeks, Nov. 26 through December 31.

The comedy has been a fixture in Chicago since 2012, delighting audience members with a twist on holiday trivia.

Did Santa babysit the baby Jesus? Why were the Three Wise Men so lost? Do you know what the holiday classic Silent Night first sounded like? The answers to these and other humorous questions are answered in this interactive holiday show.In its review, *The Chicago Reader* recommended the show, saying, "Vicki Quade has made a career out of Catholic comedy (Late Nite Catechism, Bible Bingo), and she's in top form here."

Quade will be sharing the role of Mrs. Mary Margaret O'Brien with the talented Chicago actresses ***Rose Guccione*** and ***Kathleen Puls Andrade***.

Andrade is a professional actor, improviser, and voiceover coach who appeared in many Nuns4Fun productions before creating her own voice coaching business, Gingrworks.com.

Before joining the Nuns4Fun family, Guccione spent 20 years with the Lyric Opera and has sung extensively in the Chicagoland area,

Europe, and South Africa. She is a faculty member at Dominican University and has a singing telegram company called OperaGram.com.

Today's Fan, an online review site, calls Christmas Bingo, "delightful." "You will be engaged by the show's uniquely interactive approach that involves a bingo game with real prizes, off-beat myths and outrageous facts about Christmas."

Show times for CHRISTMAS BINGO are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m.

LATE NITE CATECHISM remains on the schedule at 5 p.m. Saturdays.

All performances are at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago.

For tickets, call the box office at 773-404-7336. Or go online to: **https://www.greenhousetheater.org/**

THE BUTTCRACKER: A NUTCRACKER BURLESQUE©, CHICAGO'S FAVORITE ALTERNATIVE HOLIDAY SHOW, RETURNS TO THE GREENHOUSE THEATER CENTER, DECEMBER 1 - 31

The Buttcracker: A Nutcracker Burlesque© has announced its return this holiday season with the sixth edition of Chicago's favorite alternative holiday show, a twist on the original story and a live event not to be missed, directed by ***Miguel Long*** and choreographed by ***Dylan Kerr***, December 1 - 31 at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave. The two-hour experience begins with a cocktail hour which includes craft vendors from local artists (Thursday nights), special pre-show performances (Friday and Saturday nights), and brunch fare (Sunday matinees), followed by *Tchaicovsky's The Nutcracker Suite* in a saucy, alternative and adult retelling of the holiday classic. Each week features the best of Chicago's nightlife entertainment in the roles of Tea, Coffee, Chocolate, Vodka and Mother Ginger, featuring sword swallowing, belly dancing, classic burlesque and more. Holiday performance schedule of Thursdays at 8 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m. with a special New Year's Eve closing night performance Saturday, Dec. 31 at 9 p.m. This New Year's Eve special event includes a party following the show with cheese and charcuterie snacks, two drink tickets for after the show, a midnight "pole dancer booty drop" countdown with balloons and prizes, a DJ and more. There are no performances Friday, Dec. 24 and Saturday, Dec. 25. Admission is available for those 18 years old and older (21+ to drink). Tickets are Industry/SRO, $20; house

left general admission, $30/$40 at the door, house center general admission, $40/$50 at the door and VIP, $75/$100 at the door with New Year's Eve tickets house left general admission, $60/$70 at the door, house center general admission $80/$90 at the door and VIP $150/$200 at the door. Tickets are now on sale at ***greenhousetheatre.org*** and ***TheButtcrackerBurlesque.com***

THE DEN THEATRE PRESENTS COMEDIAN BRAD WILLIAMS DECEMBER 16 & 17ON THE HEATH MAINSTAGE

The Den Theatre presents comedian ***Brad Williams***, performing four stand-up shows December 16 & 17, 2022 on The Heath Mainstage, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Chicago's Wicker Park neighborhood.

Pound for pound, Brad Williams is the funniest comedian in the country right now, and has become one of the most in-demand comedians working today. A California native, Williams started doing stand-up comedy as a teenager and has been touring successfully ever since, routinely selling out shows all over the country and the world.

Williams has parlayed that success into a multitude of stand-up television experiences, including The Tonight Show, Dave Attell's Comedy Underground and Jimmy Kimmel Live. His first one-hour special, Fun Size, was the highest rated special on Showtime, and a year later, he followed that up with his second special, Daddy Issues, which was more successful than the first and prompted The New York Times to write "No one is doing it [stand-up comedy] more hilariously than Brad Williams." His third special in three years was an uproarious one, hosting some of the edgiest comedians in the country from the prestigious Montreal Just For Laughs Festival. Recently, his groundbreaking special on Netflix The Degenerates, garnered huge ratings and rave reviews.

Also an accomplished actor, Williams has appeared on numerous TV shows and feature films, including FX's Legit, Sam and Cat, Mind of Mencia, Pitboss, a recurring role on the Hulu original show Deadbeat, and memorable roles in a plethora of movies, including Little Evil, produced by Scott Stuber (Ted), as well as the Netflix original Christopher Guest film, Mascots.

In addition to stand-up and acting, Williams has become a dynamic on-air personality. His 5 years of podcasting with Adam Ray, with the show "About Last Night," was a mainstay on the iTunes charts. He is also a regular contributor on KROQ's Kevin and Bean Show in Los Angeles, as well as Adam Carolla's podcast, "The Adam Carolla Show."

Williams' ability to make humorous and inspiring observations on disability, relationships, sex and race are consistently winning over audiences and proving anyone can overcome their shortcomings. His live performances are always high energy and frequently feature full standing ovations from those in attendance, which prompted the late Robin Williams to call him "Prozac with a head."

Tickets $20 - $40 are currently available at ***thedentheatre.com*** or by calling **(773) 697-3830.**

WINDY CITY GAY CHORUS ANDWINDY CITY TREBLE QUIRE PRESENT *TOGETHER FOR THE HOLIDAYS* Saturday, December 3

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The Windy City Gay Chorus and Windy City Treble Quire are excited to start their2022-2023 season with their 2022 holiday concert, Together for the Holidays, under thedirection of Dr. Eric Esparza, Interim Conductor.

From personal favorites to songs of the past, this concert will help kick start the holidays withmusic that will be sure to bring light and joy to audiences.Holtschneider Performance Center, Gannon Concert Hall, 2330 NorthHalsted Street, Chicago, IL 60614.

For more details about upcoming events and performances by the Windy City Gay Chorus and Windy City Treble Quire, visit **windycitysings.org.**

THE DEN THEATRE ANNOUNCES COMEDIAN ATSUKO OKATSUKA SATURDAY FEBRUARY4, 2023 ON THE HEATH MAINSTAGE

The Den Theatre is pleased to announce comedian ***Atsuko Okatsuka***, playing two stand-up performances on Saturday, February 4, 2023 at 7 pm and 9:15 pm on The Heath Mainstage, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Chicago's Wicker Park neighborhood.

Atsuko Okatsuka is a stand-up comedian, actor and writer based in LA. Atsuko was named one of Variety's "10 Comics to Watch for 2022." She is touring her show "The Intruder" at JFL Montreal Festival and the 2022 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Atsuko made her late-night stand-up debut on The Late Late Show with James Corden. She was the special correspondent on Arsenio! Live for the Netflix is a Joke Festival. Atsuko stars in the new Comedy Central animated series Fairview and the Paramount+ feature film, Washingtonia, from EP Stephen Colbert. She's written for Adult Swim's The Eric Andre Show and Soft Focus with Jena Friedman. Atsuko's on-screen credits include History of the World Pt. II (Hulu), Room 104 (HBO) and The Show Next Door with Randall Park (ROKU+). Atsuko was named a "Comedian to Watch" by Vulture & "Top 10 Comedians to Watch" for TimeOut LA. She is also fluent in Japanese and Mandarin.

For Tickets or additional information, visit ***www.thedentheatre.com.***

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